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Message Text

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21
ACTION AID-20

INFO OCT-01 NEA-14 ISO-00 IGA-02 HUD-02 SP-03 EB-11 NSC-07

RSC-01 CIEP-03 TRSE-00 SS-20 STR-08 OMB-01 CEA-02

CIAE-00 COME-00 FRB-03 INR-11 NSAE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12

LAB-06 SIL-01 PA-04 PRS-01 USIA-15 DRC-01 /156 W
---------- 107777
R 180641Z AUG 74
FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0570

UNCLAS KUWAIT 3453

STATE ALSO FOR AID/TA/STS

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAID, ECRE, KU, US
SUBJECT: REIMBURSABLE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: GOK REQUEST
FOR HOUSING ASSISTANCE.

SUMMARY: GOK HAS REQUESTED USG NOMINATE HOUSING EXPERT TO ASSIST KUWAITIS IN $700 MILLION HOUSING PROGRAM. PROGRAM WILL BE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT PUBLIC WORKS PROJECT IN KUWAIT OVER NEXT FIVE YEARS WITH IMPORTANT POLITICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS. PROJECT ALSO CONTAINS MAJOR EXPORT POSSIBILITIES FOR U.S. FIRMS. EMBASSY URGES POSITIVE REPLY TO GOK REQUEST. END SUMMARY.

1. ACTING MINISTER PUBLIC WORKS, ABDULLAH AL-GHANIM WHO IS ALSO MINISTER ELECTRICITY AND WATER, CALLED ME TO HIS OFFICE AUGUST 17 AND ASKED IF USG COULD HELP KUWAIT AS IT UNDERTAKES A MAJOR NEW HOUSING PROGRAM. AL-GHANIM, WHO DISCUSSED PROJECT WITH MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS, PRESENTLY VACATIONING IN LEBANON, SAID LATTER ENTHUSIASTICALLY SUPPORTS IDEA OF BRINGING U.S. EXPERT TO ASSIST KUWAITIS. KUWAITIS WOULD LIKE TO WORK OUT ARRANGEMENT SIMILAR TO THAT WHICH ALREADY EXISTS WITH FHWA.

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2. U.S. EXPERT WILL BE EXPECTED TO ASSIST AND ADVISE NEWLY

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FORMED HIGHER HOUSING COMMITTEE. COMMITTEE CONSISTS MAINLY OF SENIOR ENGINEERS DRAWN FROM SEVERAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES. COMMITTEE WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL ASPECST HOUSING AND ALL TYPES OF PUBLICLY SUPPORTED HOUSING. IT WILL HAVE KD 200 MILLION (KD 1 - $3.38) TO SPEND ON HOUSING PROGRAMS OVER NEXT FIVE YEARS. KUWAITIS WILL WANT U.S. EXPERT TO HELP ORGANIZE THE COMMITTEE AND TO ASSIST WITH SELECTION OF CONSULTANTS.

3. COMMENT: PUBLIC HOUSING, MAINLY FOR BEDOUIN BUT ALSO FOR MIDDLE CLASS KUWAITIS INCLUDING GRADUATES RETURNING FROM STUDY OVERSEAS, HAS BECOME CONTROVERSIAL SUBJECT IN KUWAIT. NATIONAL ASSEMBLY RECENTLY PUT CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE ON GOK TO DO MORE ABOUT HOUSING AND HOUSING IS LIKELY TO BE IMPORTANT ISSUE IN NEXT JANUARY'S PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS. PROJECT WILL HAVE PROFOUND EFFECTS ON LIFE IN KUWAIT. IT IS, IN SHORT, ONE OF THE LARGEST AND MOST IMPORTANT ENTERPRISES UNDERWAY HERE. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT IF U.S. HAD INSIDE ROLE, IT COULD BE OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE IN SECURING SIZABLE ORDERS FOR U.S. SUPPLIERS AND FOR U.S. ARCHITECTS, ENGINEERS AND/OR CONSULTANTS.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: LOOK FORWARD TO EARLY POSITIVE REPLY REGARDING OUR ABILITY TO NOMINATE U.S. EXPERT TO WORK WITH KUWAIT HIGHER HOUSING COMMITTEE. ALTHOUGH, WE ASSUME DEPARTMENT WILL CONSULT WITH HUD, OCCURS TO US THAT EXPERT COULD COME FROM STATE OR LOCAL AGENCIES AS WELL AS FROM FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. WOULD APPRECIATE ANY SUGGESTIONS DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO MAKE BUT IN ANY CASE HOPE WE CAN GIVE KUWAITIS GENERALLY POSITIVE REPLY EVEN THOUGH CERTAIN SPECIFIC DETAILS MAY HAVE TO BE WORKED OUT LATER.
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